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MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE:

OR, AN

ESSAY

ON AN

ANCIENT PROPHETICAL INSCRIPTION,

IN MONKISH RHYME,

Lately discovered near LYNN in NORFOLK.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

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ANCIENT PROPHETICAL INSCRIPTION,

IN MONKISH RHYME,

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BY PROBUS BRITANICUS.

Printed and Published in the Year M.DCC.XXXIX.

A NEW EDITION,

With NOTES, and a DEDICATION to

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

BY TRIBUNUS.

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TO

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

SIR,

I HAD lately the following curious *Eſſay put into my Hands by a particular Friend; which, on account of its great Singularity and Scarcity, I wiſh to reſcue from Oblivion; and I know not how I can more effectually do this, than by connecting it with ſo* great *and* illuſtrious *a Name as your own; which I hope will not excite your Anger, or incur your Reſentment, as it is my Intention to vindicate you from a Charge, that, conſidering*

the Contents of the Eſſay itſelf, and your particular political Connections at this Time, may be of infinite Service, if not in augmenting your well-earned PENSION *(if that Word give not Offence) yet in preventing any Diminution, or total Abolition of it.*

So extraordinary a Performance as the following is, could not fail to excite a very eager Deſire of knowing the Author; when, to my great Surprize, it was poſitively aſſerted to be the Production of the maſterly Pen of Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.—*I remonſtrated again and again with my Friend upon the Abſurdity of the Surmiſe; and pointed out innumerable Paſſages which I thought ſerved to deſtroy his poſitive Aſſertions. This only tended to increaſe his Prejudices in favour of his own Preconceptions, and confirm me in the Reſolution of republiſhing the Eſſay, with ſuch Remarks as ſhould invalidate every Argument, and remove every Suſpicion that ſavoured of its being the Production of your Pen: And*

indeed

indeed I flatter myſelf that a Shadow of Doubt will not appear of your being the Author of it, when the Whole has been peruſed and compared with thoſe Two inimitable *and* unanſwerable *Pamphlets with which you have obliged* your *Royal Maſter, and* our *moſt gracious Sovereign, and* his *able Miniſters: I mean the* FALSE ALARM, *and that moſt excellent Vindication (intitled* TAXATION NO TYRANNY) *of what the Faction or Whigs (which by your excellent Dictionary we are taught to be one and the ſame) call the moſt ominous Syſtem of Deſpotiſm that this, or any other Free State ever ſaw planned, and which their fanatical Zeal moſt religiouſly reprobates.*

I urged in your Vindication, learned Sir! that it was impoſſible ſo pointed an Attack on the glorious Revolution; ſuch bitter Reflections, keen Sarcaſms, and perſonal Invectives againſt the illuſtrious HOUSE OF HANOVER, *which are to be found in the following Eſſay; could proceed from the Pen of the* now *renowned Champion for the Ho-*

nour and Glory of One of the Houſe of Brunſwick; *whoſe Exaltation to the Throne of theſe Realms has ever been Matter of the* greateſt *Diſtreſs, Trouble, and Diſappointment to* Tories *and* Jacobites; *neither of whom can ever diſcover Zeal or Attachment to* any *reigning Monarch, unleſs the Maxims of his Government ſhould be the ſame with thoſe, which, in their warmeſt Wiſhes, they would deſire to ſee the curſed and expelled Race of the* STUARTS *adopt and purſue. This indeed may gain a temporary Allegiance, and procure an outward Shew of Obedience, as it would not only gratify their high-flown extravagant Notions of* hereditary Right *and* unlimited Authority, *but afford ſome diſtant Proſpect and Hope, that a Deviation from all Principles and Maxims that firſt, in the Opinion of the* Whigs, *vindicated the Depoſition of the* STUARTS, *and Elevation of the Houſe of* Hanover, *might, by a happy Train of political Conſequences, reſtore the imperial Diadem to that Head, round which every Jacobite would wiſh to ſee it caſt its* hereditary

tary *Splendor. No Man can be hardy enough to impute to Dr.* JOHNSON *Wiſhes or Expectations of ſuch a Nature—more extravagant to his enlightened Mind and loyal Heart, than the Doctrine of Ghoſts and Phantoms, or the Pretenſions to Second Sight in the Highlands of* Scotland; *a Country whoſe Poverty and Barrenneſs you have, as a faithful Hiſtorian, deſcribed and expoſed, though treated with* Lettered Hoſpitality, *and partaking of every Convenience that* ſuch *a Country could afford. Nor could you, Sir, had you thoſe Predilections in favour of the Houſe of* STUART *that ſome would ſuggeſt, have miſſed ſo fair an Opportunity of crediting* that *Country for thoſe illuſtrious Names that ſwayed the Sceptre in* this,

The ſurmiſe, Sir, that you are the Author of the following Eſſay, could only be deſigned to tarniſh your unblemiſhed *Reputation, or prejudice you in the Opinion of* your *Royal Maſter; the friendly Rays of whoſe Favour and Protection have beneficently ſhone upon*

upon your Merit; *not indeed, by its Irradiations, to make it more conſpicuous, that were impoſſible, ſo unrivalled is your Fame*; *but to afford his affectionate Subjects indubitable Proofs of his Diſcernment and Juſtice, of which indeed the far greater Part of them require no other Evidences than what his Majeſty has* already *afforded.*

And though the unſatisfied Humours of ſome falſe Pretenders to Patriotiſm, have riſen into Ferments of Oppoſition; *and they have more than hinted at a Breach of the Royal Oath, ſolemnly ſworn at his Majeſty's Coronation*; *and talked of the abſolute Treaſon of Miniſters againſt the State—repreſenting the Meaſures reſpecting* America, *as open, violent, and audacious Breaches of the moſt ſacred Part of the* CONSTITUTION; *augmenting the utter* Deſtruction *of* FREEDOM, *and Eſtabliſhment of* DESPOTISM: *Yet of theſe ominous Fears and diſaſtrous Conjectures we are happily freed by the late* able *Vindi-*

cation

cation of theſe Meaſures and Miniſters in the late celebrated Piece, intituled, TAXATION NO TYRANNY—*wherein the Charge of* REBELLION *is brought Home againſt the* Americans; *and their Struggles for what they call* LIBERTY, *proved to be the froward Oppoſition of diſobedient Children, and rebellious Inſurrections againſt the* PARENT STATE.—*We ſee all their pretended Claims to natural free-born Subjects refuted.—We are peremptorily told by Dr.* JOHNSON, *that the* Americans *reſigned all Right and Title to the Name, Character, and Immunities of true-born* Engliſhmen, *when they inſolently fled from Oppoſition and Tyranny, which here they complained of, and would not patiently endure; and that they denuded themſelves of all Rights and juſt Claims to Privilege and Protection, when their inflexible and pertinacious Folly led them to a Deſert; and that the* Atlantic *waſhed clear away every Relict of free Subjects.*

We

We muſt now ceaſe to pity their Oppreſſion, *becauſe you, Sir, have proved them* Slaves; *their Complaints muſt* now *be deemed the Voice of Sedition, becauſe Dr.* JOHNSON *declares their Reſiſtance* REBELLION.—*Let us leave then* America *to mourn her Fate, which the high-born Spirit of her yet untamed Sons ſeem determined, if poſſible, to retard by reſolute Oppoſition and bold Encounter, in which ſome turbulent and equally rebellious Sons at Home, with anxious and forward Zeal, wiſh them Succeſs; and congratulate our native Country, that has ſuch a pious and ever-watchful Guardian on the Throne, and ſuch Miniſters ſurrounding it, who are determined at all Events, and at every deſperate Hazard, to ſacrifice all, even our own Children, before One Branch of the Royal Prerogative ſhall be loſt, the Omnipotence of Parliament queſtioned, or the Grandeur of the* Britiſh *Empire impaired.*

Can

Can it remain a Queſtion, that the ſtrenuous *Vindicator of the Honour of the* Engliſh *Crown, now worn by One of the illuſtrious Houſe of* Hanover, *is the Author of the Eſſay in Debate? or that you, Sir, would receive a Penſion from* that *Hand, which, according to the Eſſayiſt, muſt ſway the Sceptre of* USURPATION? *The Degeneracy of the preſent Times, though the Dregs of* Rome, *will not allow of a Suſpicion that implies ſuch a Profligacy of Mind, Corruption of Manners, and Deſtitution of Principles.*

The Arguments I further urged to diſprove the Aſſertion that you, Sir, was the Author of the following Eſſay, were, that from the direct Attack upon the Hanover *Succeſſion, and Invectives againſt the* illuſtrious *Progenitors of our moſt* gracious *Sovereign, it is manifeſt, that the Eſſayiſt was a high-flown* Jacobite, *and* really *wrote upon* Principle; *which he ſeems openly to* avow, *by the Signature he aſſumes of* PROBUS BRITANICUS. *Now, ſaid I, can the very*

Enemies of Dr. JOHNSON *ſuppoſe that he could have been the Author of the Eſſay, and yet in ſo public and daring a Manner renounce every Principle therein adopted and inferred? Can it be imagined that his Probity and Honour were ſo unſtable and pliable as to become the eaſy Purchaſe of the firſt State Corrupter that ſhould aſſail his Virtue? or is it probable that he ſhould revolt from the glaring Principles of* Jacobitiſm (if ever he had adopted them) *which your ſtanch* Tories *hold with equal Faith as they do their Bibles, and which they defend with Apoſtolic Zeal?—If, ſaid I, the Doctor had ever taken up this Creed, I am thoroughly convinced that no Conſiderations in the World would ever have induced him to diſcard it: He is pertinacious almoſt to a Fault; and ſo fully convinced of his own Tenets, that his beſt Friends cannot produce One Inſtance of his Conviction.—All Inſinuations that the Doctor's former political Principles leaned towards* Jacobitiſm *are refuted by the forward Zeal he has ſhewn, and*

Affection

Affection he has diſcovered, for his preſent *Majeſty and the* righteous *Adminiſtration of his Government. And if the Story be true (which I think much to be queſtioned) that Dr.* JOHNSON *once refuſed to walk in the Royal Gardens becauſe in Poſſeſſion of an* USURPER, *yet it does not appear to have been in the* preſent *Reign; and the elegant Poem of* London, *the Production of this learned Man, gives us a true Picture of his Mind, at leaſt in the* laſt.

Here let thoſe reign whom PENSIONS *can invite*
To vote a Patriot Black, a Courtier White;
Explain their Country's dear-bought Rights away,
And plead for Pirates in the Face of Day;
With ſlaviſh Tenets taint our poiſoned Youth,
And lend a Lie the Confidence of Truth.

Thus driven out of every ſtrong Hold of Argument and Defence, my Friend, Sir, had recourſe to thoſe Definitions of PENSION *and*

PENSIONER, *which have been ſo often bandied about, and to be found inſcribed on that Coloſſean Column of Fame, your Dictionary; and gravely read from it the Two following Articles of your Impeachment.*

PENSION. *An Allowance made to any One without an Equivalent: In* England *it is generally underſtood to mean Pay given to a State-hireling for Treaſon to his Country.*

PENSIONER. *A Slave of State hired by a Stipend to obey his Maſter.*

Theſe read; with an Air of Triumph, he exclaimed—"Now vindicate the Doctor if "you can."—*The Word* Equivalent *gave the Turn to my Plea; and I peremptorily declared, that in the very Senſe of the Lexicographer, his Majeſty's* Bounty *to* you, *Sir, was* not *a* PENSION; *ſince it muſt firſt be proved that his Majeſty is* your *Maſter, and* acknowledged ſuch by you; *and that you*

obey

obey *him.—I next urged that you had given him an* AMPLE Equivalent *for Royal Munificence.*—" What!" *replied he, with great Quickneſs,* " by giving up in Return, Ho-" nour, Character, Conſcience, and every " Thing that ſhould diſtinguiſh a Man!"

To ſuch the Plunder of the Land is given,
When Crimes inflame the Wrath of angry
Heav'n!

Poem of London.

I anſwered this exclamatory Interrogation only with a Smile of ineffable Contempt.—As to the latter Part of the Deſcription, viz. that a Penſion is generally underſtood in ENGLAND to mean Pay given to a State-hireling for Treaſon to his Country, *I replied—Suppoſe Dr.* JOHNSON, *or myſelf, chooſe to take the Words in the* Scotiſh *Acceptation of them; and if the Idea of a* State-hireling *in that Country doth not materially differ from that received in our own, the Idea of* TREASON doth, *or at leaſt* hath done *moſt eſſentially.*

Thus,

Thus, Sir, having I hope fully and unanſwerably confuted the invidious Charge, that you are the Author of the following Eſſay; *and put it out of all Doubt, or even a Queſtion, that you* can *be* PROBUS BRITANICUS, *I humbly take my Leave; careleſs on whom the Charge or Guilt may fall, now I have exculpated you; for I had no other Deſign in View than to do Juſtice to your ſuper-eminent Merit and Abilities, and to ſhew you to the Public in your* true *Character; nor am I conſcious of the leaſt Tincture of Pride mixing itſelf with this pure Deſign; no, not even the moſt diſtant Emulation with our gracious Sovereign, whoſe* high *Example and* illuſtrious *Virtues I hope I ſhall never have the Temerity or daring Ambition to* imitate. *In you, Sir, his* preſent *Majeſty finds a* firm, ſteady, *and* able *Advocate for the* Houſe of Brunſwick, *and conſequently deems you as* good *a Friend as he himſelf wiſhes to the glorious Revolution; a Period, the Bleſſings of which we almoſt ceaſe to rejoice at, as they*

are

are nearly eclipſed by thoſe manifold Bleſſings we enjoy under the mild *and* auſpicious *Reign of* GEORGE THE THIRD; *a Prince who hath concentered in himſelf ſuch* rare *Qualities, that I will be bold enough to declare he hath* ſuch *a Poſſeſſion of the Affections of the* good *People of* England, *and all* true *Friends of the Conſtitution, that they* cannot *love and revere him* more.

I am, with the profoundeſt *Reſpect,*
and higheſt *Veneration,*
Very learned Sir,
Your moſt obedient, and
moſt humble Servant,

TRIBUNUS.

AN ESSAY ON AN ANCIENT INSCRIPTION

Diſcovered near LYNN in NORFOLK.

IN *Norfolk* near the Town of *Lynn*, in a Field which an ancient Tradition of the Country affirms to have been once a deep Lake or Meer, and which appears from authentic Records to have been called, about Two hundred Years ago, *Palus*, or the Marſh, was diſcovered not long ſince a large ſquare Stone, which is found upon an exact Inſpection to be a kind of coarſe Marble, of a Subſtance not firm enough to admit of being poliſhed, yet harder than our common Quarries afford, and not eaſily ſuſceptible of Injuries from Weather or outward Accidents.

It was brought to light by a Farmer, who obſerving his Plough obſtructed by ſomething, through which the Share could not make its Way, ordered his Servants to remove it. This was not effected without ſome Difficulty, the Stone being Three Feet Four Inches Deep, and Four Feet Square in the Superficies, and conſequently of a Weight not eaſily manageable. However, by the Application of Levers, it was at Length raiſed, and conveyed to a Corner of the Field, where it lay for ſome Months entirely unregarded: Nor perhaps had we ever been made acquainted with this venerable Relict of Antiquity, had not our good Fortune been greater than our Curioſity.

A Gentleman, well known to the learned World, and diſtinguiſhed by the Patronage of the *Mæcenas* of *Norfolk*, whoſe Name, was I permitted to mention it, would excite the Attention of my Reader, and add no ſmall Authority to my Conjectures, obſerving, as he was walking that Way, that the Clouds began to gather

and

and threaten him with a Shower, had recourſe for ſhelter to the Trees under which this Stone happened to lie, and ſat down upon it in Expectation of fair Weather. At length he began to amuſe himſelf in his Confinement, by clearing the Earth from his Seat with the Point of his Cane, and had continued this Employment ſome Time, when he obſerved ſeveral Traces of Letters antique and irregular, which by being very deeply engraven were ſtill eaſily diſtinguiſhable.

This Diſcovery ſo far raiſed his Curioſity, that going Home immediately, he procured an Inſtrument proper for cutting out the Clay that filled up the Spaces of the Letters, and with very little Labour made the Inſcription legible, which is here exhibited to the Public:

POST-GENITIS.

Cum Lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet Incola ſtagni,
Vel Pede Equus tanget,
Vel Arator vomere franget,

Sentiet ægra Metus,
Effundet Patria Fletus,
Littoraque ut Fluctu,
Resonabunt Oppida Luctu:
Nam fœcunda rubri
Serpent per Prata Colubri,
Gramina vastantes,
Flores Fructusque vorantes,
Omnia fœdantes,
Vitiantes, et spoliantes;
Quanquam haud pugnaces,
Ibunt per cuncta Minaces,
Furès absque Timore,
Et pingues absque Labore.
Horrida dementes
Rapiet Discordia Gentes,
Plurima tunc Leges
Mutabit, plurima Reges
Natio, conversâ
In Rabiem tunc contremet Ursâ
Cynthia, tunc latis
Florebunt Lilia Pratis,
Nec fremere audebit
Leo, sed violare timebit,

Omnia

Omnia conſuetus
Populari Paſcua lætus.

Ante Oculos Natos
Calceatos et Cruciatos

Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitâque Libidine pravus.

En quoque quod Mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,

Sanguinem Equus ſugit,
Neque Bellua victa remugit.

Theſe Lines he carefully copied, accompanied in his Letter of *July* 19, with the following Tranſlation:

To POSTERITY.

Whene'er this Stone, now hid beneath the Lake,
The Horſe ſhall trample, or the Plough ſhall break,
Then, O my Country! ſhalt thou groan diſtreſt,
Grief ſwell thine Eyes, and Terror chill thy Breaſt.

Thy

Thy Streets with Violence of Woe ſhall ſound,
Loud as the Billows burſting on the Ground.
Then thro' thy Fields ſhall ſcarlet Reptiles
ſtray,
And Rapine and Pollution mark their Way.
Their hungry Swarms the peaceful Vale ſhall
fright,
Still fierce to threaten, ſtill afraid to fight;
The teeming Year's whole Product ſhall
devour.
Inſatiate pluck the Fruit, and crop the Flow'r:
Shall glutton on the induſtrious Peaſants Spoil,
Rob without Fear, and fatten without Toil.
Then o'er the World ſhall diſcord ſtretch her
Wings,
Kings change their Laws, and Kingdoms
change their Kings.
The Bear enrag'd th' affrighted Moon ſhall
dread;
The Lilies o'er the Vales triumphant ſpread;
Nor ſhall the Lion, wont of old to reign
Deſpotic o'er the deſolated Plain,
Henceforth th' inviolable Bloom invade,
Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry Glade;
His tortur'd Sons ſhall die before his Face,
While he lies melting in a lewd Embrace;

And,

And, yet more ſtrange! his Veins a Horſe
ſhall drain,
Nor ſhall the paſſive Coward once complain.

I make not the leaſt Doubt, but that this learned Perſon has given us, as an Antiquary, a true and uncontrovertible Repreſentation of the Writer's Meaning, and am ſure he can confirm it by innumerable Quotations from the Authors of the middle Age, ſhould he be publickly called upon by any Man of eminent Rank in the Republic of Letters; nor will he deny the World that Satisfaction, provided the Animadverter proceeds with that Sobriety and Modeſty, with which it becomes every learned Man to treat a Subject of ſuch Importance.

Yet with all proper Deference to a Name ſo juſtly celebrated, I will take the Freedom of obſerving that he has ſucceeded better as a Scholar than a Poet; having fallen below the Strength, the Conciſeneſs, and at the ſame Time below the Perſpicuity of his Author. I ſhall not point out the particular Paſſages in which

which this Diſparity is remarkable, but content myſelf with ſaying in general, that the Criticiſms, which there is room for on this Tranſlation, may be almoſt an Incitement to ſome Lawyer, ſtudious of Antiquity, to learn *Latin*.

The Inſcription which I now proceed to conſider, wants no Arguments to prove its Antiquity to thoſe among the learned who are verſed in the Writers of the darker Ages; and know that the *Latin* Poetry of thoſe Times was of a peculiar Caſt and Air, not eaſy to be underſtood, and very difficult to be imitated; nor can it be conceived that any Man would lay out his Abilities on a Way of writing, which though attained with much Study could gain him no Reputation, and engrave his Chimæras on a Stone to aſtoniſh Poſterity.

Its Antiquity therefore is out of Diſpute, but how high a Degree of Antiquity is to be aſſigned it, there is more Ground for Enquiry than Determination. How early *Latin* Rhymes made their Appear-

Appearance in the World is yet undecided by the Critics. Verſes of this Kind were called *Leonine*, but whence they derived that Appellation the learned *Camden* confeſſes himſelf ignorant, ſo that the Stile carries no certain Marks of its Age. I ſhall only obſerve farther on this Head, that the Characters are nearly of the ſame Form with thoſe on King *Arthur*'s Coffin, but whether from their Similitude we may venture to pronounce them of the ſame Date, I muſt refer to the Deciſion of better Judges.

Our Inability to fix the Age of this Inſcription neceſſarily infers our Ignorance of its Author, with relation to whom many Controverſies may be ſtarted worthy of the moſt profound Learning, and moſt indefatigable Diligence.

The firſt Queſtion that naturally ariſes is, Whether he was a *Briton* or a *Saxon?* I had at firſt conceived ſome Hope, that in this Queſtion, in which not only the idle Curioſity of Virtuoſos, but the Ho-

nour of Two mighty Nations is concerned, ſome Information might be drawn from the Word *Patria* [my Country] in the Third Line; *England* being not in Propriety of Speech the Country of the *Saxons*; at leaſt not at their firſt Arrival. But upon farther Reflection this Argument appeared not concluſive, ſince we find that in all Ages Foreigners have affected to call *England* their Country, even when, like the *Saxons*, of old they came only to plunder it*.

An Argument in favour of the *Britons*, may indeed be drawn from the Tenderneſs with which the Author ſeems to lament his Country, and the Compaſſion he ſhows for its approaching Calamities. I, who am a Deſcendant from the *Saxons*, and therefore unwilling to ſay any Thing derogatory from the Reputation of my Forefathers, muſt yet allow this Argument its full Force: For it has been rarely, very rarely, known, that Foreigners, how-

* The *Scotch* affect this, under theſe Circumſtances, at this very Time.

ever

ever well treated, careſſed, enriched, flattered, or exalted, have regarded this Country with the leaſt Gratitude or Affection, till the Race has by long Continuance, after many Generations, been naturalized and aſſimilated †.

They have been ready upon all Occaſions to prefer the petty Intereſts of their own Country, though perhaps only ſome deſolate and worthleſs Corner of the World. They have employed the Wealth of *England*, in paying Troops to defend Mud-wall Towns, and uninhabitable Rocks, and in purchaſing Barriers for Territories of which the natural Sterility ſecured them from Invaſion *.

† This perhaps will account for the extraordinary Gratitude and Affection diſcovered by our preſent gracious Sovereign; but the Inuendo, and coarſe Compliment to his Royal Predeceſſors, plainly prove, that this could *not* have been written by Dr. *Johnſon*, who is ſo remarkable for Politeneſs and courtly Manners.

* The Electorate of *Hanover* is not remarkable for well-built Towns, fertile Fields, or waving Harveſts.

N. B. Dr. *Johnſon* has made the like Obſervations on *Scotland*, in his Voyage to the *Hebrides*.

This Argument, which wants no particular Inſtances to confirm it, is, I confeſs, of the greateſt Weight in this Queſtion, and inclines me ſtrongly to believe that the benevolent Author of this Prediction muſt have been BORN A BRITON.

The learned Diſcoverer of the Inſcription was pleaſed to inſiſt with great Warmth upon the Etymology of the Word *Patria*, which ſignifying, ſays he, *the Land of my Father*, could be made uſe of by none but ſuch whoſe Anceſtors had reſided here: But in Anſwer to this Demonſtration, as he called it, I only deſired him to take Notice, how common it is for Intruders of Yeſterday, to pretend the ſame Title with the ancient Proprietors, and having juſt received an Eſtate by voluntary Grant, to erect a Claim of *hereditary Right* *.

* Could the Defenders of the illuſtrious Houſe of *Hanover* ever have penſioned ſuch a Jacobitical Libeller of the firſt illuſtrious Heroes of the *Brunſwick* Line?

Nor

Nor is it leſs difficult to form any ſatisfactory Conjecture, concerning the Rank or Condition of the Writer, who, contented with a Conſciouſneſs of having done his Duty, in leaving this ſolemn Warning to his Country, ſeems ſtudiouſly to have avoided that Veneration, to which his Knowledge of Futurity undoubtedly entitled him, and thoſe Honours which his Memory might juſtly claim from the Gratitude of Poſterity, and has therefore left no Trace by which the moſt ſagacious and diligent Enquirer can hope to diſcover him.

This Conduct alone ought to convince us, that the Prediction is of no ſmall Importance to Mankind, ſince the Author of it appears not to have been influenced by any other Motive, than that noble and exalted Philanthropy, which is above the narrow Views of Recompenſe or Applauſe.

That Intereſt had no Share in this Inſcription is evident beyond Diſpute, ſince the Age in which he lived received neither

ther Pleaſure nor Inſtruction from it. Nor is it leſs apparent, from the Suppreſſion of his Name, that he was equally a Stranger to that wild Deſire of Fame, which has ſometimes infatuated the nobleſt Minds.

His Modeſty, however, has not been able wholly to extinguiſh that Curioſity, which ſo naturally leads us, when we admire a Performance, to enquire after the Author. Thoſe whom I have conſulted on this Occaſion, and my Zeal for the Honour of this Benefactor of my Country has not ſuffered me to forget a ſingle Antiquary of Reputation, have almoſt unanimouſly determined, that it was written by a King. For where elſe, ſaid they, are we to expect that Greatneſs of Mind, and that Dignity of Expreſſion, ſo eminently conſpicuous in this Inſcription?

It is with a proper Senſe of the Weakneſs of my own Abilities, that I venture to lay before the Public the Reaſons which hinder me from concurring with this

this Opinion, which I am not only inclined to favour by my Reſpect for the Authors of it, but by a natural Affection to Monarchy, and a prevailing Inclination to believe that *every* Excellence is inherent in a King †.

To condemn an Opinion ſo agreeable to the Reverence due to the regal Dignity, and countenanced by ſo great Authorities, without a long and accurate Diſcuſſion, would be a Temerity juſtly liable to the ſevereſt Cenſures. A ſupercilious and arrogant Determination of a Controverſy of ſuch Importance would doubtleſs be treated by the Impartial and Candid with the utmoſt Indignation.

But as I have too high an Idea of the Learning of my Contemporaries, to obtrude any crude, haſty, or indigeſted Notions on the Public, I have proceeded

† Without yielding in the leaſt to the Suſpicion that Dr. *Johnſon* is the Author of this Eſſay, we may venture to ſuggeſt, that perhaps the Doctor's Loyalty may be owing to ſuch a Predilection in favour of Monarchy.

with

with the utmoſt Degree of Diffidence and Caution, I have frequently reviewed all my Arguments, traced them backwards to their firſt Principles, and uſed every Method of Examination to diſcover whether all the Deductions were natural and juſt, and whether I was not impoſed on by ſome ſpecious Fallacy *; but the farther I carried my Enquiries, and the longer I dwelt upon this great Point, the more was I convinced, in ſpite of all my Prejudices, that this wonderful Prediction was not written by a King.

For after a laborious and attentive Peruſal of Hiſtories, Memoirs, Chronicles, Lives, Characters, Vindications, Panegyricks, and Epitaphs, I could find no ſufficient Authority for aſcribing to any of our *Engliſh* Monarchs, however gracious or

* I wiſh, ſaid my Friend, invidiouſly, that Dr. *Johnſon* had proceeded with the ſame Caution and Diffidence, had reviewed his Arguments, and traced out his firſt Principles, &c. before he had ſent forth into the World his FALSE ALARM, and TAXATION NO TYRANNY.

glorious,

glorious, any prophetical Knowledge or Preſcience of Futurity. Which, when we conſider how rarely regal Virtues are forgotten, how ſoon they are diſcovered, and how loudly they are celebrated, affords a probable Argument at leaſt, that none of them have laid any Claim to this Character. For why ſhould Hiſtorians have omitted to embelliſh their Accounts with ſuch a ſtriking Circumſtance? or if the Hiſtories of that Age are loſt by Length of Time, why was not ſo uncommon an Excellence tranſmitted to Poſterity in the more laſting Colours of Poetry? Was that unhappy Age without a Laureat? Was there then no *Young* or *Philips*, no *Ward* or *Mitchel*, to ſnatch ſuch Wonders from Oblivion, and immortalize a Prince of ſuch Capacities? If this was really the Caſe, let us congratulate ourſelves upon being reſerved for better Days, Days ſo fruitful of happy Writers that no princely Virtue can ſhine in vain. Our Monarchs are ſurrounded with refined Spirits, ſo penetrating that they frequently diſcover in their Maſters great Qualities inviſible

to vulgar Eyes, and which, did not they publiſh them to Mankind, would be unobſerved for ever.

Nor is it eaſy to find in the Lives of our Monarchs many Inſtances of that Regard for Poſterity, which ſeems to have the prevailing Temper of this venerable Man. I have ſeldom in any of the gracious Speeches delivered from the Throne, and received with the higheſt Gratitude and Satisfaction by both Houſes of Parliament, diſcovered any other Concern than for the current Year, for which Supplies are generally demanded in very preſſing Terms, and ſometimes ſuch as imply no remarkable Solicitude for Poſterity *.

* Had the Author lived in good GEORGE the Third's Reign, he muſt have altered his Opinion, as he would have ſeen *ſuch* Oeconomy in the Prince in the Expenditure, and *ſuch* Modeſty in the prime Miniſter in raiſing the Supplies, with ſuch *remarkable* Solicitude for Poſterity, that the Happineſs of the *preſent* Age ſeems almoſt totally neglected.

Nothing

Nothing indeed can be more unreaſonable and abſurd, than to require that a Monarch, diſtracted with Cares and ſurrounded with Enemies, ſhould involve himſelf in ſuperfluous Anxieties by an unneceſſary Concern about future Generations. Are not Pretenders, Mock-patriots, Maſquerades, Operas, Birth-nights, Treaties, Conventions, *Reviews*, Drawing-rooms, the Births of Heirs, and the Deaths of Queens, ſufficient to overwhelm any Capacity but that of a King? Surely he that acquits himſelf ſucceſsfully of ſuch Affairs, may content himſelf with the Glory he acquires, and leave Poſterity to his Succeſſors.

That this has been the Conduct of moſt Princes, is evident from the Accounts of all Ages and Nations, and therefore I hope it will not be thought that I have, without juſt Reaſons, deprived this Inſcription of the Veneration it might demand as the Work of a King.

With what laborious Struggles againſt Prejudice and Inclination, with what Efforts of Reaſoning and Pertinacity of Self-denial, I have prevailed upon myſelf to ſacrifice the Honour of this Monument to the Love of Truth, none who are unacquainted with the Fondneſs of a Commentator will be able to conceive. But this Inſtance will be, I hope, ſufficient to convince the Public that I write with Sincerity, and that whatever my Succeſs may be, my Intentions are good.

Where we are to look for our Author it ſtill remains to be conſidered, whether in the high Road of public Employments, or the Bye-paths of private Life.

It has always been obſerved of thoſe that frequent a Court, that they ſoon, by a kind of Contagion, catch the regal Spirit of neglecting Futurity. The Miniſter forms an Expedient to ſuſpend or perplex an Enquiry into his Meaſures for a few Months, and applauds and triumphs in his own Dexterity. The Peer puts off his

his Creditor for the preſent Day, and forgets that he is ever to ſee him more. The Frown of a Prince, and the Loſs of a Penſion, have indeed been found of wonderful Efficacy, to abſtract Mens Thoughts from the preſent Time, and fill them with Zeal for the Liberty and Welfare of Ages to come †. But I am inclined to think more favourably of the Author of this Prediction, than that he was made a Patriot by Diſappointment or Diſguſt. If he ever ſaw a Court, I would willingly believe, that he did not owe his Concern for Poſterity to his ill Reception there, but his ill Reception there to his Concern for Poſterity.

However, ſince Truth is the ſame in the Mouth of a Hermit, or a Prince; ſince it is not Reaſon but Weakneſs that makes

† This could never have been written by Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON; his Experience would have ſet the Remark in the following Order: The Smiles of a Prince, and *the Enjoyment of a Penſion,* have been found of wonderful Efficacy to *fix* Mens Thoughts on the preſent Times and Meaſures, be they ever ſo profligate and ruinous, and to *fill* them with Zeal in ſupport of them, regardleſs of Ages to come.

us rate Counſel by our Eſteem for the Counſellor; let us at length deſiſt from this Enquiry, ſo uſeleſs in itſelf, in which we have Room to hope for ſo little Satisfaction. Let us ſhow our Gratitude to the Author, by anſwering his Intentions, by conſidering minutely the Lines which he has left us, and examining their Import without Heat, Precipitancy, or Party-prejudices; let us endeavour to keep the juſt Mean, between ſearching ambitiouſly for far-fetched Interpretations, and admitting ſuch low Meaning, and obvious and low Senſe, as is inconſiſtent with thoſe great and extenſive Views, which it is reaſonable to aſcribe to this excellent Man.

It may be yet farther aſked, whether this Inſcription, which appears on the Stone, be an Original, and not rather a Verſion of a traditional Prediction in the old *Britiſh* Tongue, which the Zeal of ſome learned Man prompted him to tranſlate and engrave in a more known Language for the Inſtruction of future Ages? But as the Lines carry at the firſt View a

Reference

Reference both to the Stone itself, and very remarkably to the Place where it was found, I cannot ſee any Foundation for ſuch a Suſpicion.

It remains now that we examine the Senſe and Import of the Inſcription, which after having long dwelt upon it with the cloſeſt and moſt laborious Attention, I muſt confeſs myſelf not yet able fully to comprehend. The following Explications therefore are by no Means laid down as certain and indubitable Truths, but as Conjectures not always wholly ſatisfactory even to myſelf, and which I had not dared to propoſe to ſo enlightened an Age, an Age which abounds with thoſe great Ornaments of human Nature, Sceptics, Antimoraliſts, and Infidels, but with Hopes that they would excite ſome Perſon of great Abilities to penetrate farther into the oraculous Obſcurity of this wonderful Prediction.

Not even the Four firſt Lines are without their Difficulties, in which the Time

of

of the Diſcovery of the Stone ſeems to be the Time aſſigned for the Events foretold by it.

Cum Lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet Incola ſtagni,
Vel Pede Equus tanget,
Vel Arator vomere franget,
Sentiet ægra Metus,
Effundet Patria Fletus,
Littoraque ut Fluctu,
Reſonabunt Oppida Luctu.

Whene'er this Stone, now hid beneath the Lake,
The Horſe ſhall trample, or the Plough ſhall break,
Then, O my Country! ſhalt thou groan diſtreſt,
Grief in thine Eyes, and Terror in thy Breaſt.
Thy Streets with Violence of Woe ſhall ſound,
Loud as the Billows burſting on the Ground.

When this Stone, ſays he, *which now lies hid beneath the Waters of a deep Lake, ſhall*

be

be ſtruck upon by the Horſe, or broken by the Plough, then ſhalt thou, my Country, be aſtoniſhed with Terrors, and drowned in Tears, then ſhall thy Towns ſound with Lamentations, as thy Shores with the Roarings of the Waves: Theſe are the Words literally rendered, but how are they verified? The Lake is dry, the Stone is turned up, but there is no Appearance of this diſmal Scene. Is not all at Home *Satisfaction* and *Tranquillity?* all Abroad *Submiſſion* and *Compliance?* Is it the Intereſt or Inclination of any Prince or State to draw a Sword againſt us? and are we not nevertheleſs *ſecured* by a numerous Standing Army, and a King who is himſelf an Army? Have our Troops any other Employment than to march to a Review? Have our Fleets encountered any thing but Winds and Worms? To me the preſent State of the Nation ſeems ſo far from any Reſemblance to the Noiſe and Agitation of a tempeſtuous Sea, that it may be much more properly compared to the dead Stillneſs of the Waves before a Storm.

Nam fœcunda rubri
Serpent per Prata Colubri,

Gramina vaſtantes,
Flores Fructuſque vorantes,

Omnia fœdantes,
Vitiantes, et ſpoliantes;

Quanquam haud pugnaces,
Ibunt per cuncta Minaces,

Fures abſque Timore,
Et pingues abſque Labore.

Then thro' thy Fields ſhall ſcarlet Reptiles
ſtray,
And Rapine and Pollution mark their Way.
Their hungry Swarms the peaceful Vale ſhall
fright,
Still fierce to threaten, ſtill afraid to fight;
The teeming Year's whole Product ſhall
devour,
Inſatiate pluck the Fruit, and crop the Flow'r:
Shall glutton on the induſtrious Peaſants Spoil,
Rob without Fear, and fatten without Toil.

He ſeems, in theſe Verſes, to deſcend to a particular Account of this dreadful Calamity;

Calamity; but his Deſcription is capable of very different Senſes with almoſt equal Probability.

Red Serpents, ſays he (*Rubri Colubri* are the *Latin* Words, which the poetical Tranſlator has rendered *ſcarlet Reptiles*, uſing a general Term for a particular, in my Opinion too licentiouſly.) *Red Serpents ſhall wander o'er her Meadows, and pillage and pollute*, &c. The particular Mention of the Colour of this deſtructive Viper may be ſome Guide to us in this Labyrinth, through which, I muſt acknowledge, I cannot yet have any certain Path. I confeſs, that when a few Days after my Peruſal of this Paſſage I heard of the Multitude of Lady-birds ſeen in *Kent*, I began to imagine that theſe were the fatal Inſects by which this *Iſland* was to be laid waſte, and therefore looked over all Accounts of them with uncommon Concern. But when my firſt Terrors began to ſubſide, I ſoon recollected that theſe Creatures, having both Wings and Feet, would ſcarcely have been called

Serpents; and was quickly convinced, by their leaving the Country without doing any Hurt, that they had no Quality, but the Colour, in common with the Ravagers here deſcribed.

As I am not able to determine any Thing on this Queſtion, I ſhall content myſelf with collecting, into one View, the ſeveral Properties of this peſtiferous Brood, with which we are threatened, as Hints to more ſagacious and fortunate Readers; who when they ſhall find any *Red Animal* that ranges uncontrouled over the Country, and devours the Labours of the Trader and the Huſbandman; that carries with it Corruption, Rapine, Pollution, and Devaſtation; that threatens without Courage, robs without Fear, and is pampered without Labour; they may know that the Prediction is completed. Let me only remark farther, that if the Stile of this, as of all other Predictions, is figurative, the Serpent, a wretched Animal that crawls upon the Earth, is a proper Emblem of low Views and ſelf-intereſt

baſe

baſe Submiſſion, as well as of Cruelty, Miſchief, and Malevolence.

I cannot forbear to obſerve in this Place, that as it is of no Advantage to Mankind to be forewarned of inevitable and inſurmountable Misfortunes, the Author probably intended to hint to his Countrymen the proper Remedies for the Evils he deſcribes. In this Calamity, on which he dwells longeſt, and which he ſeems to deplore with the deepeſt Sorrow, he points out one Circumſtance which may be of great Uſe to diſperſe our Apprehenſions, and awaken us from that Panick which the Reader muſt neceſſarily feel at the firſt tranſient View of this dreadful Deſcription. Theſe Serpents, ſays the Original, are HAUD PUGNACES, *of no fighting Race:* They will threaten, indeed, and hiſs, and terrify the Weak, and Timorous, and Thoughtleſs, but have no real Courage or Strength. So that the Miſchief done by them, their Ravages, Devaſtations, and Robberies, muſt be *only* the Conſequences of Cowardice in the Sufferers,

ferers, who are harraſſed and oppreſſed *only* becauſe they ſuffer it *without* Reſiſtance. We are therefore to remember, whenever the Peſt here threatened ſhall invade us, that Submiſſion and Tameneſs will be *certain* Ruin; and that *nothing* but Spirit, Vigilance, Activity, and Oppoſition *can* preſerve us from the moſt hateful and reproachful Miſery, *that of being plundered, ſtarved, and devoured by Vermin and by* [ſcarlet] *Reptiles* *.

Horrida dementes
Rapiet Diſcordia Gentes,
Plurima tunc Leges
Mutabit, plurima Reges
Natio,

* To impute ſuch Sentiments as theſe, ſo highly injurious to the Gentlemen of the Sword, from whoſe Spirit and Activity Dr. JOHNSON and Lord NORTH expect the total Subduction of *America*, to this ingenious Writer, would be a manifeſt Injuſtice and Abſurdity. I chuſe to mention this particularly, becauſe I ſhould think the Writer's *Noſe*, if not his *Life*, would ſtand but a bad Chance from ſome of our Military Gentry.

Then

Then o'er the World ſhall Diſcord ſtretch her Wings,
Kings change their Laws, and Kingdoms change their Kings.

Here the Author takes a general Survey of the State of the World, and the Changes that were to happen about the Time of the Diſcovery of this Monument in many Nations. As it is not likely that he intended to touch upon the Affairs of other Countries any farther than the Advantage of his own made it neceſſary, we may reaſonably conjecture, that he had a full and diſtinct View of all the Negociations, Treaties, Confederacies, of all the triple and quadruple Alliances, and all the Leagues offenſive and defenſive, in which we were to be engaged, either as Principals, Acceſſaries, or Guarantees, whether by Policy, or Hope, or Fear, or our Concern for preſerving the *Balance of Power*, or our Tenderneſs for the *Liberties of Europe*. He knew that our Negotiators would intereſt us in the Affairs of the whole Earth, and that no State could either

haps for that very Reaſon, not the true Inſcription. How can we reconcile it with the following Paſſage?

Nec fremere audebit
Leo, ſed violare timebit,
Omnia conſuetus
Populari Paſcua lætus.

Nor ſhall the Lion, wont of old to reign
Deſpotic o'er the deſolated Plain,
Henceforth th' inviolable Bloom invade,
Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry Glade:

In which the Lion, that uſed at Pleaſure to lay the Paſtures waſte, is repreſented as not daring to touch the Lilies, or murmur at their Growth: The Lion, it is true, is one of the Supporters of the Arms of *England*, and may therefore figure our Countrymen, who have in ancient Times made *France* a Deſert. But can it be ſaid, that the Lion dares not murmur or rage (for *fremere* may import both) when it is evident, that for many Years this whole Kingdom has murmured?

However,

However, it may be at preſent calm and ſecure, by its Confidence in the Wiſdom of our Politicians and the Addreſs of our Negotiators.

Ante Oculos Natos
Calceatos et Cruciatos

Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitâque Libidine pravus.

His tortur'd Sons ſhall die before his Face,
While he lies melting in a lewd Embrace.

Here are other Things mentioned of the Lion equally unintelligible, if we ſuppoſe them to be ſpoken of our Nation, as that ſhe lies ſluggiſh, and depraved with unlawful Luſts, while his Offspring is trampled and tortured before his Eyes. But in what Place can the *Engliſh* be ſaid to be trampled or tortured? Where are they treated with Injuſtice or Contempt? What Nation is there from Pole to Pole that does not reverence the Nod of the *Britiſh* King? Is not our Commerce *un-*

reſtrained? Are not the Riches of the World our own? Do not our Ships ſail unmoleſted, and our Merchants traffick in perfect Security? Is not the very Name of *England* treated by Foreigners in a Manner *never known before?* Or if ſome *ſlight* Injuries have been *offered*, if ſome of our *petty* Traders have been *ſtopped*, our Poſſeſſions *threatened*, our Effects *confiſcated*, our Flag *inſulted*, or our Ears *cropped*, have we lain *ſluggiſh* and *unactive?* Have not our Fleets been ſeen in Triumphat *Spithead?* Did not HOSIER viſit the *Baſtimentos?* and is not HADDOCK now ſtationed at *Port Mahon?*

En quoque quod Mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,
Sanguinem Equus ſugit,
Neque Bellua victa remugit.

And, yet more ſtrange! his Veins a Horſe
ſhall drain,
Nor ſhall the paſſive Coward once complain.

It is farther aſſerted in the concluding Lines, that the Horſe ſhall ſuck the Lion's Blood. This is ſtill more obſcure than any of the reſt; and indeed the Difficulties I have met with ever ſince the firſt Mention of the Lion are ſo many and great, that I had, in utter deſpair of ſurmounting them, once deſiſted from my Deſign of publiſhing any Thing upon this Subject; but was prevailed upon by the Importunity of ſome Friends, to whom I can deny nothing, to reſume my Deſign; and I muſt own, that nothing animated me ſo much as the Hope they flattered me with, that my Eſſay might be inſerted in the *Gazetteer*, and ſo become of Service to my Country.

That a weaker Animal ſhould ſuck the Blood of a ſtronger without Reſiſtance is wholly improbable and inconſiſtent with the Regard for Self-preſervation, ſo obſervable in every Order and Species of Beings. We muſt therefore neceſſarily endeavour after ſome figurative Senſe not liable to ſo inſuperable an Objection.

Were

Were I to proceed in the ſame Tenour of Interpretation, by which I explained the Moon and the Lilies, I might obſerve that a Horſe is borne in the Arms of *Hanover*. But how then does the Horſe ſuck the Lion's Blood? Money is the Blood of the Body Politic.——But my Zeal for the preſent *happy* Eſtabliſhment will not ſuffer me to purſue a Train of Thought that leads to ſuch ſhocking Concluſions. The Idea is deteſtable, and ſuch as, it ought to be hoped, can enter into the Mind of none but a virulent Republican, or *Bloody Jacobite*. There is not *one honeſt* Man in the Nation unconvinced how weak an Attempt it would be to endeavour to confute this Inſinuation. An Inſinuation which no Party will dare to abet, and of ſo fatal and deſtructive a Tendency, that it may prove equally dangerous to the Author whether true or falſe †.

† Could the Author of the FALSE ALARM, and TAXATION NO TYRANNY, be ever ſuppoſed to have written this virulent Attack?—No! Conjecture itſelf is put to Flight.

As therefore I can form no Hypotheſis on which a conſiſtent Interpretation may be built, I muſt leave theſe looſe and unconnected Hints entirely to the Candour of the Reader, and confeſs that I do not think my Scheme of Explication juſt, ſince I cannot apply it throughout the Whole, without involving myſelf in Difficulties, from which the ableſt Interpreter would find it no eaſy Matter to get free.

Being therefore convinced upon an attentive and deliberate Review of theſe Obſervations, and a Conſultation with my Friends, of whoſe Abilities I have the higheſt Eſteem, and whoſe Impartiality, Sincerity, and Probity I have long known and frequently experienced, that my Conjectures are in general *very* uncertain, *often* improbable, and *ſometimes* little leſs than apparently falſe, I was long in doubt whether I ought not entirely to ſuppreſs them, and content myſelf with publiſhing in the *Gazetteer* the Inſcription, as it ſtands engraven on the Stone, without Tranſlation

or

or Commentary, unleſs that ingenious and learned Society ſhould favour the World with their own Remarks.

To this Scheme, which I thought extremely well calculated for the public Good, and therefore very eagerly communicated to my Acquaintance and Fellow Students, ſome Objections were ſtarted, which, as I had not foreſeen, I was unable to anſwer.

It was obſerved, firſt, That the *Daily Diſſertations* publiſhed by that Fraternity, are written with ſuch Profundity of Sentiment, and filled with ſuch uncommon Modes of Expreſſion, as to be themſelves ſufficiently unintelligible to vulgar Readers, and that therefore the venerable Obſcurity of this Prediction would much leſs excite the Curioſity, and awaken the Attention of Mankind, than if it were exhibited in any other Paper, and placed in Oppoſition to the clear and eaſy Stile of an Author generally underſtood.

To

To this Argument, formidable as it was, I anſwer'd, after a ſhort Pauſe, that with all proper Deference to the great Sagacity and advanced Age of the Objector, I could not but conceive that his Poſition confuted itſelf; and that a Reader of the *Gazetteer*, being by his own Confeſſion accuſtomed to encounter Difficulties, and ſearch for Meaning where it was not eaſily to be found, muſt be better prepared than any other Man for the Peruſal of theſe ambiguous Expreſſions. And that, beſides, the Explication of this Stone, being a Taſk, which nothing could ſurmount but the moſt acute Penetration joined with indefatigable Patience, ſeemed in Reality reſerved for thoſe who have given Proofs of both in the higheſt Degree by reading and underſtanding the *Gazetteer*.

This Anſwer ſatisfied every one but the Objector, who with an Obſtinacy, not very uncommon, adhered to his own Opinion, though he could not defend it; and not being able to make any Reply, attempted to laugh away my Argument,

either riſe or decline in Power, either extend or loſe its Dominions, without affecting Politics and influencing our Counſels.

This Paſſage will bear an eaſy and natural Application to the preſent Time, in which ſo many Revolutions have happened, ſo many Nations have changed their Maſters, and ſo many Diſputes and Commotions are embroiling almoſt in every Part of the World.

That almoſt every State in *Europe* and *Aſia*, that is, almoſt every Country then known, is comprehended in this Prediction, may be eaſily conceived; but whether it extends to Regions at this Time undiſcovered, and portends any Alteration of Government in *Carolina* and *Georgia*, let more able or more daring Expoſitors determine.

——— *Converſâ*
In Rabiem tunc contremet Urſâ
Cynthia,

The

The Bear enrag'd th' affrighted Moon ſhall dread.

The Terror created to the Moon by the Anger of the Bear, is a ſtrange Expreſſion, but may perhaps relate to the Apprehenſions raiſed in the *Turkiſh* Empire, of which a Creſcent or new Moon is the imperial Standard, by the increaſing Power of the Empreſs of *Ruſſia*, whoſe Dominions lie under the Northern Conſtellation called *The Bear*.

——— *Tunc latis*
Florebunt Lilia Pratis.

The Lilies o'er the Vales triumphant ſpread.

The Lilies borne by the Kings of *France* are an apt Repreſentation of that Country; and their flouriſhing over wide extended Valleys ſeems to regard the new Increaſe of the *French* Power, Wealth, and Dominions, by the Advancement of their Trade, and the Acceſſion of *Loraine*. This is at the firſt View an obvious, but, per-

It was hinted by another, that an Inſcription which had no Relation to any particular Set of Men amongſt us, but was compoſed many Ages before the Parties, which now divide the Nation, had a Being, could not be ſo properly conveyed to the World by Means of a Paper, dedicated to political Debates.

Another, to whom I had communicated my own Obſervations in a more private Manner, and who had inſerted ſome of his own Arguments, declared it, as his Opinion, that they were, though very controvertible and unſatisfactory, yet too valuable to be loſt; and that though to inſert the Inſcription in a * Paper of which ſuch Numbers are daily diſtributed at the

* The Paper here alluded to, and ſo frequently mentioned in this Pamphlet, was called the GAZETTEER. It was publiſhed at a heavy and unpardonable public Expence for the baſe Purpoſe of defending the Meaſures of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE in Parliament. The beſt Writers, the JOHNSONS of his Time, were paid and *penſioned* by Government for their Eſſays written in Praiſe of a proſtituted Premier and his Tools.

Expence

Expence of the Public, would doubtleſs be very agreeable to the generous Deſign of the Author, yet he hoped that as all the Students, either of Politics or Antiquities, would receive both Pleaſure and Improvement from the Diſſertation, with which it is accompanied, none of them would regret to pay for ſo agreeable an Entertainment.

It cannot be wondered that I have yielded at laſt to ſuch weighty Reaſons, ſuch inſinuating Compliments, and choſen to gratify at once the Inclinations of Friends, and the Vanity of an Author. Yet I ſhould think I had very imperfectly diſcharged my Duty to my Country, did I not warn all whom either Intereſt or Curioſity ſhall incite to the Peruſal of this Treatiſe, not to lay any Streſs upon my Explications.

How a more complete and indiſputable Interpretation may be obtained, it is not eaſy to ſay. This will, I ſuppoſe, be readily granted, that it is not to be expected

pected from any ſingle Hand, but from the joint Enquiries and united Labours of a numerous Society of able Men, inſtituted by Authority, ſelected with great Diſcernment and Impartiality, and ſupported at the Charge of the Nation.

I am very far from apprehending that any Propoſal for the Attainment of ſo deſirable an End, will be rejected by this inquiſitive and enlightened Age, and ſhall therefore lay before the Public the Project which I have formed and matured by long Conſideration, for the Inſtitution of a Society of Commentators upon this Inſcription.

I humbly propoſe, that Thirty of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Genius be choſen for this Employment, Half from the Inns of Court, and Half from the Army, and be incorporated into a Society for Five Years, under the Name of the SOCIETY OF COMMENTATORS.

That

That great Undertakings can only be executed by a great Number of Hands, is too evident to require any Proof; and I am afraid all that read this Scheme will think that it is chiefly defective in this Reſpect, and that when they reflect how many Commiſſaries were thought neceſſary at *Seville*, and that even their Negociations entirely miſcarried, probably for Want of more Aſſociates, they will conclude, that I have propoſed Impoſſibilities, and that the Ends of the Inſtitution will be defeated by an injudicious and ill-timed Frugality.

But if it be conſidered, how well the Perſons I recommend muſt have been qualified by their Education and Profeſſion for the Provinces aſſigned them, the Objection will grow leſs weighty than it appears. It is well known to be the conſtant Study of the Lawyers to diſcover in Acts of Parliament Meanings which eſcaped the Committees that drew them up, and the Senates that paſſed them into Laws, and to explain Wills into a

Senſe

Senſe wholly contrary to the Intention of the Teſtator. How eaſily may an Adept in theſe admirable and uſeful Arts penetrate into the moſt hidden Import of this Prediction? A Man accuſtomed to ſatisfy himſelf with the obvious and natural Meaning of a Sentence, does not eaſily ſhake off his Habit; but a rue-bred Lawyer never contents himſelf with One Senſe when there is another to be found.

Nor will the beneficial Conſequences of this Scheme terminate in the Explication of this Monument; they will extend much farther: For the Commentators having ſharpened and improved their Sagacity by this long and difficult Courſe of Study, will, when they return into public Life, be of wonderful Service to the Government, in examining Pamphlets, Songs, and Journals, and in drawing up Informations, Indictments, and Inſtructions for ſpecial Juries. They will be wonderfully fitted for the Poſts of Attorney and Solicitor General, but will excel above all as Licenſers for the Stage.

The

The Gentlemen of the Army will equally adorn the Province to which I have aſſigned them, of ſetting the Diſcoveries and Sentiments of their Aſſociates in a clear and agreeable Light. The Lawyers are well known not to be very happy in expreſſing their Ideas, being for the moſt Part able to make themſelves underſtood by none but their own Fraternity. But the Geniuſes of the Army have ſufficient Opportunities, by their free Acceſs to the Levee and the Toilet, their conſtant Attendance on Balls and Aſſemblies, and that abundant Leiſure which they enjoy beyond any other Body of Men, to acquaint themſelves with every new Word and prevailing Mode of Expreſſion, and to attain the utmoſt Nicety and moſt poliſhed Prettineſs of Language.

It will be neceſſary, that during their Attendance upon the Society, they be exempt from any Obligation to appear on *Hyde Park*; and that upon no Emergency, however preſſing, they be called away from their Studies, unleſs the Na-

tion be in immediate Danger, by an Inſurrection of Weavers, Colliers, or Smugglers.

There may not perhaps be found in the Army ſuch a Number of Men, who have ever condeſcended to paſs through the Labours and irkſome Forms of Education in Uſe among the lower Claſſes of People, or ſubmitted to learn the mercantile and plebeian Arts of Writing and Reading: I muſt own, that though I entirely agree with the Notions of the Uſeleſſneſs of any ſuch trivial Accompliſhments in the Military Profeſſion, and of their Inconſiſtency with more valuable Attainments; though I am convinced that a Man who can read and write becomes, at leaſt, a very diſagreeable Companion to his Brother Soldiers, if he does not abſolutely ſhun their Acquaintance; that he is apt to imbibe from his Books odd Notions of Liberty and Independency, and even ſometimes of Morality and Virtue, utterly inconſiſtent with the deſirable Character of a pretty Gentleman; though Writing fre-

frequently ſtains the whiteſt Finger, and Reading has a natural Tendency to cloud the Aſpect, and depreſs that airy and thoughtleſs Vivacity which is the diſtinguiſhing Characteriſtic of a modern Warrior; yet on this ſingle Occaſion I cannot but heartily wiſh, that by a ſtrict Search there may be diſcovered in the Army Fifteen Men who can write and read *.

I know that the Knowledge of the Alphabet is ſo diſreputable among theſe Gentlemen, that thoſe who have by ill Fortune formerly been taught it, have partly forgot it by Diſuſe, and partly concealed it from the World, to avoid the Railleries and Inſults to which their Education might make them liable: I propoſe therefore, that all the Officers of the Army may be examined upon Oath One by One,

* Conſidering the *great* Dependence upon the Army, and the *frequent* Reviews which his Majeſty delights to take of his Troops, together with Dr. JOHNSON's *preſent* Pay and *good* Quarters, I wiſh he would exculpate himſelf from the Charge of being the Writer of this Pamphlet under his own Hand and proper Signature: I am afraid his Reputation may ſuffer under my unſkilful Vindication.

and that if Fifteen cannot be ſelected who are at preſent ſo qualified, the Deficiency may be ſupplied out of thoſe who having once learned to read, may, perhaps, with the Aſſiſtance of a Maſter, in a ſhort Time refreſh their Memories.

It may be thought, at the firſt Sight of this Propoſal, that it might not be improper to aſſign to every Commentator a Reader and Secretary; but it may be eaſily conceived, that not only the Public might murmur at ſuch an Addition of Expence, but that by the Unfaithfulneſs or Negligence of their Servants, the Diſcoveries of the Society may be carried to foreign Courts, and made uſe of to the Diſadvantage of our own Country.

For the Reſidence of this Society, I cannot think any Place more proper than *Greenwich* Hoſpital, in which they may have Thirty Apartments fitted up for them, that they may make their Obſervations in private, and meet once a Day in the painted Hall to compare them.

If

If the Eſtabliſhment of this Society be thought a Matter of too much Importance to be deferred till the New Buildings are finiſhed, it will be neceſſary to make Room for their Reception, by the Expulſion of ſuch of the Seamen as have no Pretenſions to the Settlement there, but fractured Limbs, Loſs of Eyes, or decayed Conſtitutions, who have lately been admitted in ſuch Numbers, that it is now ſcarce poſſible to accommodate a Nobleman's Groom, Footman, or Poſtilion in a Manner ſuitable to the Dignity of his Profeſſion, and the original Deſign of the Foundation.

The Situation of *Greenwich* will naturally diſpoſe them to Reflection and Study; and particular Caution ought to be uſed, leſt any Interruption be ſuffered to diſſipate their Attention, or diſtract their Meditations: For this Reaſon, all Viſits and Letters from Ladies are ſtrictly to be prohibited; and if any of the Members ſhall be detected with a Lap-dog, Pack of Cards, Box of Dice, Draught-table, Snuff-box,

or

or Looking-glaſs, he ſhall for the Firſt Offence be confined for Three Months to Water-gruel, and for the Second be expelled the Society.

Nothing now remains, but that an Eſtimate be made of the Expences neceſſary for carrying on this noble and generous Deſign. The Salary to be allowed each Profeſſor cannot be leſs than 2000*l.* a Year, which is indeed more than the regular Stipend of a Commiſſioner of Exciſe; but it muſt be remembered, that the Commentators have a much more difficult and important Employment, and can expect their Salaries but for the ſhort Space of Five Years; whereas a Commiſſioner (unleſs he *imprudently* ſuffers himſelf to be carried away by a *whimſical* Tenderneſs for his Country) has an Eſtabliſhment for Life.

It will be neceſſary to allow the Society in general 30,000*l.* yearly for the Support of the public Table, and 40,000*l.* for Secret Service.

Thus

Thus will the Miniſtry have a fair Proſpect of obtaining the full Senſe and Import of the Prediction, without burthening the Public with more than 650,000*l.* which may be paid out of the Sinking Fund*; or if it be not thought proper to violate that ſacred Treaſure by converting any Part of it to Uſes not primarily intended, may be eaſily raiſed by a general Poll-tax, or Exciſe upon Bread.

Having now compleated my Scheme; a Scheme calculated for the public Be-

* I wonder, ſays my Friend, from *what* Fund the Doctor's Penſion is derived!—The Privy Purſe, replied I.—From *whence* is that filled? quoth he.—There is no End in anſwering ſuch Queſtions, ſaid I.—Thus diſputing every Inch of Ground, and fighting all the Lines through, of this extraordinary political Field, I put my Adverſary to Flight; not without ſome diſtant Hopes of being noticed by the learned and ingenious Doctor in his next patriotic Publication, or receiving myſelf ſome beneficent Token of Royal Favour and Protection, to which, with all Modeſty, I think myſelf as *much* intitled, as *ſome* whom the King, in the Exuberance of his Bounty, *hath delighted to honour*.

nefit,

nefit, without Regard to any Party; I in treat all Sects, Factions, and Diſtinctions of Men among us, to lay aſide for a Time their Party-feuds and petty Animoſities, and by a warm Concurrence on this urgent Occaſion, teach Poſterity to ſacrifice every private Intereſt to the Advantage of their Country.

FINIS.